

Conversations With PREKESE GhanaMedia- Things We Take for Granted....Subway Music.

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Dear Friends and Fans,



In New York City, the underground train service is known as the Subway. There are trains to all the five boroughs of the city. The boroughs are Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan and Staten Island. One of the fastest means to travel in the city is via using the numerous subway trains which are identified by numbers of 1,2,3,4,5,6, and 7 as well as alphabets, A,B,C,D,E,F,G,I,J,K,L, M, N,Q,R, and S Trains. The subway and the city bus services are managed by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. Under a special Arts in the Subway Program, the subway stations have interesting attractions such as arts decor and live music performances by freelance and professional artists of various backgrounds who perform for the riders to enjoy, appreciate and be entertained. The Music Under New York (M.U.N.Y) oversees the music in the New York subway program (Groups range from US citizens and performers from around the world residing in the city)(In our next article we will share with you the first Ghanaian group to perform in the NYC subway). One interesting observation about music making and creation in the subway is the response from the riders which is most of the time mixed. While some receive and show enthusiastic response to the live performances, other complain of too much noise. The story below which was culled from Facebook has an interesting life lesson for all us regarding music making in the community. Please read and share the article:

"In Washington DC , at a Metro Station, on a cold January morning in 2007, a man with a violin played six Bach pieces for about 45 minutes. During that time, approximately 2000 people went through the station, most of them on their way to work. After about four minutes, a middle-aged man noticed that there was a musician playing. He slowed his pace and stopped for a few seconds, and then he hurried on to meet his schedule. About four minutes later, the violinist received his first dollar. A woman threw money in the hat and, without stopping, continued to walk. At six minutes, a young man leaned against the wall to listen to him, then looked at his watch and started to walk again. At ten minutes, a three-year old boy stopped, but his mother tugged him along hurriedly. The kid stopped to look at the violinist again, but the mother pushed hard and the child continued to walk, turning his head the whole time. This action was repeated by several other children, but every parent – without exception – forced their children to move on quickly. At forty-five minutes: The musician played continuously. Only six people stopped and listened for a short while. About twenty gave money but continued to walk at their normal pace. The man collected a total of \$32. After one hour: He finished playing and silence took over. No one noticed and no one applauded. There was no recognition at all. No one knew this, but the violinist was Joshua Bell, one of the greatest musicians in the world. He played one of the most intricate pieces ever written, with a violin worth \$3.5 million dollars. Two days before, Joshua Bell sold-out a theater in Boston where the seats averaged \$100 each to sit and listen to him play the same music. This is a true story. Joshua Bell, playing incognito in the D.C. Metro Station, was organized by the Washington Post as part of a social experiment about perception, taste and people's priorities. This experiment raised several questions: In a common-place environment, at an inappropriate hour, do we perceive beauty? If so, do we stop to appreciate it? Do we recognize talent in an unexpected context? One possible conclusion reached from this experiment could be this: If we do not have a moment to stop and listen to one of the best musicians in the world, playing some of the finest music ever written, with one of the most beautiful instruments ever made... How many other things are we missing as we rush through life?"

This piece is dedicated to all our Friends and Fans, preparing for and writing exams this week. You mean a lot to us and May God open your eyes so that you can have the patience to read through all the questions, understand them before you attempt answering them intelligently.

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